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County Employment and Wages in Nebraska — Fourth Quarter 2014

The two largest counties in Nebraska reported employment gains from December 2013 to December 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2013 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Charlene Peiffer noted that employment rose 1.7 percent in Douglas County and 0.8 percent in Lancaster County. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment advanced 2.2 percent from December 2013 to December 2014 as 319 of the 339 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Weld, Colo., and Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increases, with gains of 8.0 percent each over the year. Atlantic, N.J., had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment, with a loss of 5.0 percent.

Among the two largest counties in Nebraska, employment was higher in Douglas (332,400) in December 2014. Lancaster County recorded an employment level of 164,900. Collectively, Nebraska's two large counties accounted for 51.9 percent of the state's employment. Nationwide, the 339 largest counties made up 72.1 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Douglas was \$932 in the fourth quarter of 2014, an increase of 4.7 percent from the fourth quarter of 2013. (See [table 1.](#)) Average weekly wages in Lancaster were \$819, up 3.8 percent over the year. Nationally, the average weekly wage was \$1,035, up 3.5 percent from a year ago.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment levels below 75,000. With the exceptions of Blaine County (\$1,131) and Stanton County (\$1,148), wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2014. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in Douglas County increased 4.7 percent, ranking it 60th among the nation's 339 largest counties. Lancaster County's 3.8-percent wage gain ranked 133rd nationwide. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, 332 of the 339 largest counties registered over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Benton, Ark., had the largest wage gain, up 9.9 percent from the fourth quarter of 2013. Washington, Pa., was second with a wage increase of 9.2 percent, followed by the counties of Midland, Texas (9.0 percent), Brazoria, Texas (8.9 percent), and Douglas, Colo. (8.8 percent).

Of the 339 largest U.S. counties, 7 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. San Mateo, Calif., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages, with a loss of 20.4 percent from the fourth quarter 2013. Olmsted, Minn., had the second largest percentage decrease with a loss of 5.5 percent, followed by Morris, N.J. (-2.9 percent); Rockland, N.Y. (-1.3 percent); and Camden, N.J., and Butler, Pa. (-0.8 percent each).

Large county average weekly wages

Douglas County's \$932 average weekly wage placed near the middle of the national ranking at 181st in the fourth quarter of 2014. Lancaster County's average weekly wage of \$819 ranked 285th among the nation's largest counties.

Nationally, 95 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,035 in the fourth quarter of 2014. San Mateo, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,166. New York, N.Y., was second at \$2,138, followed by Santa Clara, Calif. (\$2,114), Suffolk Mass. (\$1,856), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,850).

Seventy-two percent of the largest U.S. counties (244) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$610), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$621) and Hidalgo (\$641), and the Florida counties of Osceola (\$687) and Lake (\$691).

Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties

Among the counties with employment below 75,000, Stanton (\$1,148), Blaine (\$1,131), Nemaha (\$990), and Washington (\$957) had average weekly wages above those of the state's two largest counties. Loup County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$414 in the fourth quarter of 2014. (See [table 2.](#))

When all 93 counties in the state were considered, 17 reported average weekly wages less than \$600, 31 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 31 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, and 14 had wages of \$800 or more. (See [chart 1.](#))

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit www.bls.gov/cew.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2013 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2014 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2013* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn13.htm. The 2014 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2015.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2015 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, September 17, 2015.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.5 million employer reports cover 139.2 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 2 largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2014

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2013-14 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2013-14 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	139,204.8	2.2	--	\$1,035	--	3.5	--
Nebraska	958.1	1.4	--	837	42	5.2	3
Douglas, Neb.....	332.4	1.7	183	932	181	4.7	60
Lancaster, Neb.....	164.9	0.8	264	819	285	3.8	133

⁽¹⁾ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁽²⁾ Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

⁽³⁾ Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁽⁴⁾ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2014

Area	Employment December 2014	Average weekly wage (¹)
United States (²)	139,204,840	\$1,035
Nebraska	958,100	837
Adams	15,134	747
Antelope	2,099	702
Arthur	84	455
Banner	163	734
Blaine	136	1,131
Boone	2,363	674
Box Butte	3,941	692
Boyd	574	526
Brown	1,235	651
Buffalo	27,182	727
Burt	1,867	729
Butler	2,711	753
Cass	5,414	701
Cedar	2,783	687
Chase	1,835	738
Cherry	2,250	606
Cheyenne	5,650	880
Clay	2,555	809
Colfax	5,046	708
Cuming	3,919	751
Custer	4,229	797
Dakota	12,337	810
Dawes	3,336	588
Dawson	11,642	701
Deuel	580	602
Dixon	1,737	631
Dodge	17,114	700
Douglas	332,436	932
Dundy	627	742
Fillmore	2,263	740
Franklin	805	659
Frontier	748	663
Furnas	2,020	666
Gage	9,021	693
Garden	555	581
Garfield	851	603
Gosper	405	700
Grant	271	667
Greeley	646	577
Hall	35,017	724
Hamilton	3,408	797
Harlan	835	586
Hayes	214	571
Hitchcock	673	692
Holt	4,601	718
Hooker	270	506
Howard	1,538	615
Jefferson	3,377	651
Johnson	1,690	668
Kearney	2,270	728
Keith	3,381	621
Keya Paha	160	561

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2014
- Continued**

Area	Employment December 2014	Average weekly wage (¹)
Kimball.....	1,633	816
Knox.....	2,937	579
Lancaster.....	164,945	819
Lincoln.....	14,764	726
Logan.....	201	552
Loup.....	119	414
Madison.....	21,865	754
McPherson.....	70	541
Merrick.....	2,477	778
Morrill.....	1,536	713
Nance.....	1,141	643
Nemaha.....	3,211	990
Nuckolls.....	1,413	574
Otoe.....	6,189	676
Pawnee.....	866	648
Perkins.....	1,161	794
Phelps.....	4,856	824
Pierce.....	2,049	708
Platte.....	18,831	788
Polk.....	1,490	697
Red Willow.....	5,398	673
Richardson.....	2,451	619
Rock.....	450	651
Saline.....	6,938	773
Sarpy.....	67,322	838
Saunders.....	5,177	672
Scotts Bluff.....	16,901	741
Seward.....	6,155	779
Sheridan.....	1,764	563
Sherman.....	824	537
Sioux.....	173	601
Stanton.....	1,361	1,148
Thayer.....	2,484	820
Thomas.....	260	616
Thurston.....	2,957	814
Valley.....	1,778	662
Washington.....	8,169	957
Wayne.....	4,113	635
Webster.....	1,056	583
Wheeler.....	328	664
York.....	7,548	763

(¹) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(²) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.
Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2014

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2013-14	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2013-14	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	139,204.8	2.2	\$1,035	--	3.5	--
Alabama.....	1,891.4	1.3	881	35	3.5	31
Alaska.....	317.6	0.8	1,063	13	4.0	20
Arizona.....	2,630.8	2.2	926	25	2.3	47
Arkansas.....	1,180.5	2.2	807	47	4.5	5
California.....	16,068.5	2.6	1,209	6	2.9	41
Colorado.....	2,478.0	3.9	1,066	12	4.1	17
Connecticut.....	1,681.2	1.2	1,278	4	2.7	45
Delaware.....	433.0	2.9	1,049	16	1.5	51
District of Columbia.....	736.9	0.9	1,696	1	3.7	28
Florida.....	8,009.6	3.5	911	28	3.1	40
Georgia.....	4,131.9	3.7	958	21	3.8	25
Hawaii.....	638.3	0.7	908	29	4.2	15
Idaho.....	650.7	2.5	782	50	4.0	20
Illinois.....	5,844.1	1.4	1,089	8	2.8	42
Indiana.....	2,946.5	1.7	846	41	3.9	22
Iowa.....	1,527.6	1.1	870	38	4.3	11
Kansas.....	1,377.2	1.3	855	39	2.6	46
Kentucky.....	1,852.2	1.8	836	43	4.1	17
Louisiana.....	1,954.0	2.1	923	26	3.8	25
Maine.....	592.7	0.9	826	44	5.1	4
Maryland.....	2,590.3	1.3	1,113	7	3.5	31
Massachusetts.....	3,415.6	2.2	1,315	3	4.5	5
Michigan.....	4,158.9	2.1	984	20	3.3	37
Minnesota.....	2,762.9	1.4	1,024	17	3.6	30
Mississippi.....	1,118.6	1.0	747	51	2.3	47
Missouri.....	2,709.8	1.5	891	32	3.4	34
Montana.....	442.2	0.5	794	48	4.5	5
Nebraska.....	958.1	1.4	837	42	5.2	3
Nevada.....	1,229.6	4.2	899	30	1.6	50
New Hampshire.....	638.0	1.4	1,081	10	6.3	2
New Jersey.....	3,933.6	1.3	1,211	5	2.0	49
New Mexico.....	808.4	1.3	850	40	4.4	10
New York.....	9,067.6	2.0	1,321	2	4.3	11
North Carolina.....	4,141.8	2.4	890	33	3.4	34
North Dakota.....	454.8	4.5	1,050	15	7.1	1
Ohio.....	5,264.3	1.6	922	27	3.9	22
Oklahoma.....	1,614.3	2.1	876	36	2.8	42
Oregon.....	1,755.4	3.2	928	23	3.8	25
Pennsylvania.....	5,716.5	1.2	1,013	18	3.7	28
Rhode Island.....	471.5	1.9	1,003	19	4.5	5
South Carolina.....	1,931.4	2.9	817	46	3.2	39
South Dakota.....	412.5	1.3	791	49	4.2	15
Tennessee.....	2,822.1	2.4	927	24	3.5	31
Texas.....	11,662.7	3.7	1,070	11	4.3	11
Utah.....	1,324.2	3.0	872	37	4.3	11
Vermont.....	311.0	0.7	882	34	4.1	17
Virginia.....	3,691.4	0.6	1,057	14	2.8	42
Washington.....	3,069.7	3.2	1,082	9	4.5	5
West Virginia.....	712.0	0.1	818	45	3.3	37
Wisconsin.....	2,789.3	1.3	894	31	3.4	34

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2014 - Continued

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2013-14	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2013-14	National ranking by percent change
Wyoming.....	283.6	1.5	952	22	3.9	22
Puerto Rico.....	944.2	-1.5	556	(3)	0.7	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.5	-0.3	746	(3)	-1.2	(3)

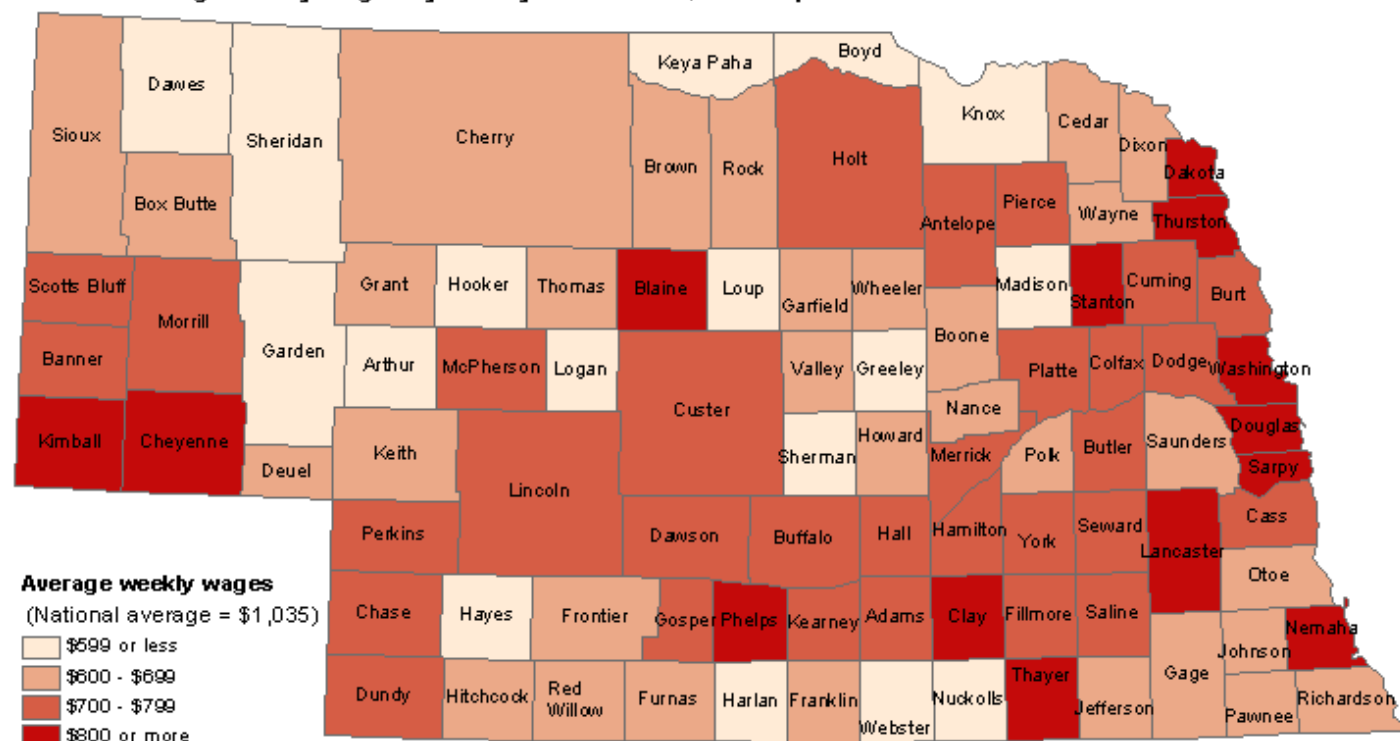
⁽¹⁾ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁽²⁾ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁽³⁾ Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.